



**Nathan Deal**  
Governor

**Bobby Cagle, MSW**  
Commissioner

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**DECAL launches new Web Site for Teachers, Parents of Infants and Toddlers  
at [www.gainfanttoddlernetwork.com](http://www.gainfanttoddlernetwork.com)**

*Site is new resource of online learning, professional development and educational resources  
for parents and teachers of infants and toddlers from birth to age three*

**ATLANTA, Ga., (May 20 , 2012)** – The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning’s (DECAL) Infant Toddler Network supports infants and toddlers by providing Georgia’s early care and education professionals with multi-faceted and culturally responsive resources that support children’s physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language development.

On **May 18, 2012**, DECAL launched a new Web site dedicated to the parents and teachers of infants and toddlers from birth to age three. The site ([www.gainfanttoddlernetwork.com](http://www.gainfanttoddlernetwork.com)) is designed to support the professional development of the infant toddler workforce with online learning, professional development and early education resources. The site will also allow visitors to e-mail specific questions to professionals in early learning, from creative classroom exercises to recipes for nutritious meals.

The web site is the latest addition to a statewide network of infant and toddler specialists created in April, 2010, to assist early care and education providers. Initial funding for the \$1.25 million project came from the federal American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA), with continued funding from the federal Child Care and Development Fund, which requires a certain portion of the child care quality funding to be spent on infants and toddlers.

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According to DECAL Commissioner Bobby Cagle promoting school readiness begins in the infant and toddler classrooms. “Our youngest learners have the right to be exposed to language all day long,” Commissioner Cagle explained, “Infant and Toddler teachers have a unique opportunity to introduce vocabulary, pull out and extend language and to help our children become keenly interested in books, sounds, and words.”

This spring and summer, DECAL’s Infant Toddler Network in partnership with the Rollins Center for Language & Learning faculty is hosting statewide conferences to prepare early childhood educators to support language and literacy development in infant and toddler classrooms. The conferences reinforce the understanding that relationships between teachers and young children coupled with intentional teaching practices are at the heart of language development. Remaining conferences will be held Saturday, June 2, 2012, in Duluth; and Saturday, June 16, 2012, in Albany. Each conference begins with registration at 7:30 AM and runs from 8:30 AM to 4:15 PM.

“The new web site expands the resources available and accessible to early childhood educators who serve Georgia’s youngest population,” said Carol Hartman, assistant commissioner of programs for DECAL. “Knowledgeable and responsive infant and toddler teachers support physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language development. Research has proven that most brain development happens in the first three years, so it is crucial that children receive positive, targeted interaction with nurturing adults.”

### **About Bright from the Start**

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia’s children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia’s Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to [www.decgal.ga.gov](http://www.decgal.ga.gov).